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NEWS RELEASE

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COURTNEY TESTIFIES IN FAVOR OF HB4143

BILL DIRECTS UNCLAIMED FUNDS FROM CLASS ACTION LAWSUITS TO LEGAL AID

(SALEM) – Senate President Peter Courtney testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee Thursday morning in favor of House Bill 4143.

The measure would direct unclaimed funds from settlements or judgments in class action lawsuits to pay for Legal Aid services for low-income Oregonians. Currently, under Oregon law, such funds that are not claimed by members of the class, are retained by the defendant.

“We are a nation of laws and a Constitution, but the sad point is we do not all have the same resources. This bill is about that,” Courtney said. “This bill is a way to make sure that all Oregonians have access to our extraordinary legal system, our courts, our judges, our attorneys. That is what is at stake in this bill.”

Courtney (D-Salem/Gerais/Woodburn) worked as a Legal Aid attorney in a small Salem office with a small group of lawyers in 1974 and 1975.

“We saw our role as giving a judicial system to people in our society who simply do not have it. We could take a person who was destitute, who had no hope in life, and give them a chance,” Courtney said. “This idea is so Oregon. We don’t let people suffer in our state if we can help it. We’re not built that way.”